

REMARKS

Applicants thank the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given the present application.

Claims 1-3, 5-10, and 12-18 are now present in this application. Claims 1 and 8 are independent. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 8 have been amended. No new matter is involved.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Telephone Interview

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the courtesies extended by Examiner Riggleman to Mr. Robert J. Webster, Reg. No., 46,472, their authorized representative during a telephone interview on May 29, 2007, during which distinctions between top flange 111, which has a notch recess 111a and side frame 115, which has an insertion hole 115a and a coupling hole 115b were discussed. Reference was made to Applicants' Fig. 4 to explain these distinctions.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

Claims 1 and 8 stand rejected under 35 USC §112, second paragraph because there is no antecedent basis for "top and bottom" and "flanges" and "frames." Accordingly, claims 1 and 8 are amended to clearly provide antecedent basis for these terms.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-3, 5-10 and 12-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a) as being anticipated by the admitted state of the art, ASA, disclosed by Applicant. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

During patent examination the PTO bears the initial burden of presenting a *prima facie* case of unpatentability. In re Oetiker, 977 F.2d 1443, 1445, 24 USPQ2d 1443, 1444(Fed. Cir. 1992); In re Piasecki, 745 F.2d 1468, 1472, 223 USPQ 785, 788(Fed. Cir. 1984). If the PTO fails to meet this burden, then the Applicant is entitled to the patent. Applicants respectfully submit that the PTO has failed to meet this burden.

Applicants' Figs. 1-3 do not disclose the invention recited in independent claims 1 and 8, as amended. For example, none of those figures showing the recited notch recesses formed at both ends of the top and bottom flanges in the vicinity of both ends of the top and bottom frames, respectively.

The outstanding Office Action completely ignores this previous paragraph, which is found in the Amendment filed on December 27, 2007, as the first paragraph on page 11 thereof, and concludes that Applicants' only arguments are vague allegations citing case law. The Office Action continues and suggests that applicants specifically and precisely claim a structure for the notch recess itself, in addition to defining the position on the front of the panel of the washing machine.

Applicants respectfully submit that is exactly what they have done, and continue to do in the pending claims. For example, claims 1 and 8 specifically recite combinations of features including "a front panel in front of the body having top and bottom frames and flanges and a plurality of notch recesses for preventing stress concentration; wherein the notch recesses are

formed at both ends of top and bottom flanges and in the vicinity of both ends of the top and bottom frames respectively.”

Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art of Fig. 3 clearly does not disclose these positively recited features, either explicitly or inherently. All that Fig. 3 shows is are key slots and coupling holes in the left and right flanges, but do not disclose the notched recesses in the top and bottom flanges, as claimed. Support for the notched recesses in the top and bottom flanges is shown, for example, in Applicants’ Fig. 4, which was discussed during the aforementioned telephone interview.

Thus, Applicants’ admitted prior art clearly does not anticipate the claimed invention.

Moreover, claims 2, 3, 5-10 and 12-18 all recite these features, so these claims patentably define over Figs. 1-3 at least for these reasons. Additionally, the claimed “U-shaped” recess feature of claims 6 and 13 is not disclosed by Figs. 1-3, either.

Accordingly, the Office Action fails to make out a *prima facie* case of anticipation of claims 1-3, 5-10 and 12-18 by Figs. 1-3.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection of claims 1-3, 5-10 and 12-18 are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response

has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

If the Examiner believes, for any reason, that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone Robert J. Webster, Registration No. 46,472, at (703) 205-8000, in the Washington, D.C. area.


Prompt and favorable consideration of this Amendment is respectfully requested.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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